

Private memo, E.G. to H.A.,  
1961

1. October 1948. Strike of the NFLU against the DiGiorgio Corporation ranch near Arvin. Mexican Nationals used behind the picket lines for six weeks in the crucial operation of irrigating. The principal issue was recognition of the Union. Those in charge of the strike were of the opinion that the use of Braceros during the critical period of the strike was decisive in the breaking of the strike.
2. April 1951. NFLU Imperial Valley strike for recognition and removal of wetbacks as well as protest against wage cuts. On a number of ranches braceros supplanted wetbacks removed as a result of union activity. Crews of nationals under police escort assigned to ranches under pressure by Imperial Valley Growers Association. No union gains.
3. May-June 1952. Imperial Valley strike of NFLU members. Involved some 550 domestic pickers. Union recognition and wages. Department of Labor authorized use of Nationals on struck ranches. The strike was lost on this account.
4. September-October 1950. San Joaquin-Stanislaus counties. Tomato pickers strike of some 3500 pickers, led by a group of 200 members Local 300 NFLU. Wage cuts and union recognition. Wages restored but could not obtain recognition. At the height of the strike about 2,000 braceros were sent in to pick under highway patrol and private police escort.

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During these five years the NFLU experienced interference from employers by the use of braceros in localized actions in cotton picking, orange harvesting, and potato picking. Strikes were not called formally in view of the activation of braceros by employers organizations. These incidents can be documented but it would require a little time.

Between 1954 and 1959 the NAWU (NFLU) was involved in similar localized actions in Salinas (carrots), Stockton (asparagus and tomatoes), Sutter (peaches), Fresno (cantaloups). In each instance union members led limited movements to stop production. Nationals were moved in to take their places. In each instance also there was police protection. Union objectives in these cases were limited, usually to preventing wage cuts, and these objectives were obtained.

It should be kept in mind that strike -breaking is a preventive device as well as a corrective one. That is, in many situations between 1950 and 1959 when the NAWU was called in to protect members it became obvious that no effective economic action was possible because of the great disparity between the number of domestics and braceros at work in the particular activity.